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THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2016

Local family receives a home

Habitat for Humanity builds lasting community bonds
Page 2

Changes to regional transit to come

Niagara region wants to make travelling to school easier for students
Page 13

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X-cited about Comic Con



ALISON LANGLEY/ POSTMEDIA NETWORK

West McDonald channels his inner Wolverine at Niagara Falls Comic Con, Saturday. See story on Page 5.

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UPFRONT

From one loving family to another

LAURA BARTON
Postmedia Network

For Irene Cadot and her two sons, it was a day of hearing the words "welcome home."

Habitat for Humanity Niagara unveiled the Cadot family's new home last Friday morning on Bell Street in Port Colborne.

Alastair Davis, the CEO of Habitat for Humanity Niagara said this home was special in many ways. It was the 50th home worked on by the organization, the first home renovation and the third home for Port Colborne.

The home was donated by the Miklosik family. Brothers John and Stephen Miklosik, former Port Colborne residents, donated their childhood home to the cause.

"When we were wondering what to do with this house, we got to talking with Alastair Davis," said Stephen. "His description of what they do persuaded us that this is the best thing we could do for the house."

John said they moved into the house before the war. It had no basement or second story until his father built them on after the war.

The brothers said they were pleased with the transformation the home has seen.

Davis said all the home needed was an update to bring it into 2016. Otherwise, everything was in good, working order when they received the house.



LAURA BARTON/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Irene Cadot and her sons Nathan and Tanner just before opening the door to their new home provided by Habitat for Humanity Niagara.

He said a lot of the original areas in the house were preserved and renovations helped enhance the rest.

"I had a vision a year or so ago of what it could look like and it's gone way beyond that," he said.

The house dedication featured many speakers passing on messages of well wishes to the Cadot family. Vance Badawey, MP, and Angie Desmarais, Port Colborne councillor for Ward 2, each spoke a few congratulatory words, too.

Badawey commended the community on helping provide a home for the Cadot family.

Desmarais said on behalf of herself and the city, "It is our extreme hope that you find everything you would ever want here and that you thrive and prosper."

The home was made possible by many members and organizations in the community, including students from Lakeshore Catholic High School's specialist high skills major program.

Principal Glenn Gifford said they jumped at the opportunity to be a part of the project and that it gave the kids tangible proof of their effort.

"It is building a home, it is building hope and it is building an opportunity," he said. "That is everything we could ask for."

The new keys to the home were passed around the crowd during the key ceremony. It gave those present the opportunity to think well-wishes for the family and house. Then the Miklosik brothers passed off the keys to Cadot and her sons.

Habitat for Humanity offers those that struggle a chance at a new home with no down payment and an interest-free mortgage. In return, they volunteer 500 hours of their time for the organization.

Many of those involved with the project said Cadot was more than willing to do that and that she was out working just as hard as the rest of them.

Cadot said she is very happy to have a place to call home for her sons and herself.

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LOCALNEWS

GE to bring 150 jobs

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

At more than 450,000 square feet, it will be the largest industrial building in Welland and second only to the entire Seaway Mall in size.

And the 150 jobs the new General Electric plant will create are likely just the beginning when it begins operations.

"This is probably the biggest news we've had in Welland for a long, long time," Welland Mayor Frank Campion said. "It's one of the biggest investments, employment and industrial manufacturing investments that we've seen."

Last Wednesday, eight months after GE management announced plans to close its plant in Waukesha, Wis. and build a new facility in Canada, Campion and Welland economic development officer Dan Degazio announced that Welland was selected as the new home for the factory, where reciprocating engines, diesel engine components and other equipment currently being manufactured in Wisconsin will be manufactured.

Construction is expected to begin before the end of this summer on 75 acres of land on the west side of Highway 140, between Silverthorn Street and Buchner Road, encompassing the entire city-owned Harry Diffin Industrial Park.

The new facility is expected to be operational by early 2018.

GE Canada spokeswoman Kim Warburton said more details about the factory will be released later this summer. However, she said the first phase of operations at the plant should create about 150 jobs. She said the company will begin hiring for some positions later this year.

The factory itself will be the first manufacturing facility of its kind in Canada.

Warburton said the facility's designation as a "brilliant factory," is a reference to the use of digital technology in the production process, providing flexibility "so more than one business requirements can be met on a changing basis."

She said plans and drawings of the building also won't be available until later this summer.

Degazio called it a "global manufacturing facility."

"It has significance not only to Welland and the Niagara Region, but it's provincially and federally significant," he said. "This is hundreds of millions of dollars that are going to be invested in Welland, and this is only the start of it. The supply chain is significant."

For every job created at the GE plant, Degazio said about two more are associated with supply chain companies, providing services and equipment to the large manufacturing plant.

Although the plant is initially expected to employ 150, he estimates that number to increase substantially since the U.S. facility it is replacing currently employs about 350 workers.



ALLAN BENNER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Welland economic development officer Dan Degazio and Mayor Frank Campion hold bottles of wine, with administrative assistance Lina DeChellis, celebrating the announcement that General Electric will be setting up shop in Welland with economic development representatives from across Niagara, including, back, from left, Evan Acs, Brian York, Jim Thibert, Adam Joon and David Oaks.

Campion said work on promoting Niagara as a new home for the GE plant began in late September, after the company announced its plans in response to U.S. government allowing the charter to lapse for the U.S. Export-Import Bank, which finances sales of industrial equipment to overseas customers.

The company planned to move operations north of the border to take advantage of the export financing provided through Export Development Canada.

Campion said he immediately called Degazio when he heard the news, but Degazio had already started working toward promoting the city as a potential location for a new manufacturing plant.

"Dan and economic development teams from throughout the region were right on it," Campion said. He told Degazio to "do what you need to do to get this here, giving Dan free rein to do what he does best, which is to get out there and close the deal."

Degazio said he and administrative assistant Lina DeChellis teamed up with economic development offices throughout the region to work toward bringing GE to Niagara.

He said economic development officers in Niagara municipalities share a common goal of bringing industry to Niagara, rather than competing with each other.

"Contrary to popular belief, we don't actually fight with each other," Degazio said, adding his colleagues from other municipalities "were all part and parcel to the initial meetings with GE which led to something coming together."

If it hadn't been for that team approach, "we weren't even in the picture."

Degazio said GE wasn't even considering Welland or any other community in the region until the company was approached by economic development officers from Welland, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Port Colborne and Fort Erie, as well as former Niagara Economic Development Corp. director Bob Seguin, who has since retired.

"They came away from that meeting with a pretty good impression," Degazio said.

GE management visited Welland last week after finalizing plans for the move. During that visit, Degazio said the managers told him they were "kind of surprised that five municipalities that were in competition were actually coming together in a cooperative mode."

"The co-operation was good news for them," Campion said. "We're all working together. It impacts the entire region. By working together in partnership, we can put a whole package together and work as one big team."

Continued on Page 7



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POSTMEDIA

GE worth celebrating



ALLAN BENNER

What was that plant called? I think it was PowerFades – a subsidiary of the Fly-by-Night Corp.

The name might have slipped my mind, but I clearly remember the day it was announced that the German-based wind turbine blade manufacturer was coming to town.

It was in city council chambers on Tuesday, April 30, 2013, and the announcement was made with all the pomp and ceremony befitting of the company's big plans to milk the Feed-in-Tariff program for all it was worth, and then high tail it out of here.

Big shots even flew in from Germany to share the amazing news with us.

I seem to recall models on display of the massive products the company was hiring 200 people to manufacture at an empty factory on Rusholme Road.

Hell, there might have even been a bagpiper.

Despite all the Champagne that was uncorked that day as well as promises of expansion, the factory shutdown suddenly in November, dashing the hopes of workers and their families and the community that surrounded it.

Welland has been burned before, far too many times.

With that in mind, I can't blame skeptics who greeted news that General Electric selected Welland for its new engine manufacturing plant with cynicism bordering on derision.

Nevertheless, this time I think there's far more room for optimism than Welland has seen for a very long time.

While the 150 new jobs to start is relatively small compared to the thousands of job losses this city has suffered, there's reason to believe we could see much more than that.

For instance, the plant in Waukesha, Wis. that this facility is replacing employs 350 people.

And although no one seems to want to shout out the numbers for fear of being called a dreamer, when supply chain jobs are added to the mix we could be talking about more than 1,000 jobs. Even that estimate could be overly conservative based on some of the projections I've heard.

According to 2011 census data, there are 2,380 unemployed people in Welland, out of the city's total workforce of 25,075. This plant will definitely take a huge bite out of that statistic.

This project also means an investment of at least $250 million in ultra valuable US currency. You don't pour that kind of money into a community without planning to stay put for an awfully long time.

It's amazing news for Welland, as well as Niagara as a whole.

But rather than making a huge deal about it, GE chose to quietly announce its plans.

It began with a somewhat cryptic e-mail from our economic development officer Dan Degazio, sent to local reporters last Tuesday afternoon, inviting them to the mayor's office the next morning. Degazio described it as "a very, very, very IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT" for the city.

While writing the word "very" three times, and "important announcement" all in capital letters certainly piqued the interest of local media, even that failed to capture the essence of the news they had for us.

But unlike the Fly-by-Night Corp., there were no marching bands parading through the halls of the Welland Civic Square – just Mayor Frank Campion and Degazio, followed by a meeting with economic development officers from other Niagara communities that pitched in to help Degazio seal the deal with the multinational corporation.

No GE representatives attended, and no other political leaders.

The lack of celebration was a bit puzzling, at first. But in hindsight, I think the way the announcement was handled speaks volumes about the company that we will soon welcome to our community.

The people of Welland know only too well how it feels to receive devastating news from the cold corporate world. John Deere pulled up stakes and headed for Mexico in 2009 leaving a big empty mess in Dain City. Energex left behind that post-apocalyptic wasteland on Ontario Road in 2014, a few years after a new manufacturing plant was constructed in Thomasville, Ala.

GE is essentially doing the same thing to the people of Waukesha.

It's a city of 70,000 people – not much larger than Welland. And there are at least 350 families who are right now feeling the same loss and uncertainty that 700 local families felt in 2009 when John Deere closed.

In this case, however, it appears the company was essentially forced to leave behind that city due to American federal government politicians who described the services provided by the U.S. Export-Import Bank as corporate welfare.

And the low-key announcement in Welland last week could have been a subtle demonstration of something of which I thought corporations were incapable; compassion.

After all, you can't celebrate Welland's success without dancing on the grave of the plant in Waukesha.

Did GE management recognize this when they chose to roll out the big news with as little fanfare as possible? I think so.

And if that's the case – if GE is a corporation that is actually capable of empathy – then we have a lot to celebrate.

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The Hip give cultural context to Canada



JENNIFER MOORADIAN

It's 8:59 a.m. on a Monday and I'm sitting in front of my laptop waiting for a ticket presale to start.

I just created a Ticketmaster account for myself as I have never purchased concert tickets online from this company. Why is a 44-year-old woman waiting for a ticket presale, an event more suitable for teenagers and 20-somethings?

Three words: The Tragically Hip.

Hip fan or not, if you're Canadian you probably know Gord Downie announced he has terminal brain cancer. For those of us who love the Hip, this news was most likely met with shock and disbelief, followed by sadness and, in some cases, tears. It seems impossible that this iconic Canadian band may be no more. I understand the Hip isn't everyone's cup of tea and if you're not a fan, you may be wondering why all the fuss and bother. That's what I want to talk about.

I wasn't always a Hip fan. Those who knew me when I lived in Kingston will attest to the truth of that statement. Many a friend attempted to persuade me to see this awesome band called The Tragically Hip at any number of local Kingston venues, but I resisted. Just this morning I was telling my partner about once passing Downie on a Kingston street, the intersection at Princess and King streets to be exact. At the time, it had little impact. This might have been 1992.

Then came *Trouble at the Henhouse. Ahead by a Century* opened my ears and mind to something I had not previously appreciated. The modern-day poetry replete with uniquely Canadian references paired with the alt-rock sound of the band and general quirkiness of singer/songwriter Downie, who seemed to embody what it meant to be Canadian made a profound impact. That was 20 years ago.

Which brings me back to why I am sitting in front of my computer on a Monday morning, toddler drooling on my lap, waiting for a ticket presale.

Take the time to listen to the Hip. Even if you don't love their sound, listen to their lyrics. Those lyrics are my generation's Canadiana. *Fifty Mission Cap, Bobcaygeon, 38 Years Old, Wheat Kings* and *Courage* are just a sampling of Tragically Hip songs dripping with Canadiana.

More than lyrical references, these songs are lessons in Canadian culture and history spotlighting Bill Barilko, Bobcaygeon, the Millhaven Maximum Security Prison break, David Milgaard and Hugh McClellan. References to the Paris of the Prairies, corduroy roads, deke, Bobby Orr and the hundredth meridian, all uniquely Canadian, are deftly woven into the Hip's narrative on Canada.

The Tragically Hip does what we as Canadians struggle to do — define ourselves as a nation separate and distinct from our overwhelming superpower neighbour. Their work gives substance to who we are as individuals while creating cultural context for who we are as a nation. And as Canadians we identify emotionally, physically and mentally with the prolific images created by Hip lyrics.

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LOCAL NEWS



HANNAH VISSER / SPECIAL POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Sarah McLeach and Connor McDuggan showed up as Harley Quinn and the Joker.

Big crowds drawn to Comic Con

ALISON LANGLEY
Postmedia Network

Geeking out is a family affair for West McDonald.

"The family who geeks together, stays together," the Port Colborne man joked last Saturday at Scotiabank Convention Centre.

McDonald brought his Wolverine alter ego to Niagara Falls Comic Con, and he didn't come alone.

He was joined by wife Lesley Stratford, as Wolverine's love interest Jean Grey, and their nine-year-old daughter Arywn McDonald, as Rey from *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

The family was a hit with the massive crowd at the convention centre and they weren't able to walk too far before being asked to pose for photos.

"I have a lot of fun seeing all the people," Arwyn said.

The family have attended the local Comic Con for the past four years.

While Stratford and Arwyn change up their costumes each year — both were Dr. Who characters last year — McDonald sticks with the popular X-Men character.

"This is the result of a lot of time in the gym," he said with a laugh.

And a lot of hair products to get the hair to look just right, plus months of grooming to perfect his Wolverine sideburns.

Caity Rendell, of Fonthill, and Welland residents Kiersten Atamanyk and Taylor Allen were dressed as characters from Disney's *Kim Possible* animated show.

"We're here because we're nerds," said Rendell, who was dressed as villain Dr. Drakken. "And we wanted to do something different, so we went with an all-female version of *Kim Possible*."

Thousands of people jammed the Stanley Avenue convention centre over the weekend for the fifth annual Niagara Falls Comic Con.

"Friday and Saturday seemed a lot busier compared to last year," event manager Chris Dabrowski said last Saturday afternoon.

Henry Winkler, known to millions as the Fonz from *Happy Days*, was one of the top celebrity draws.

Continued on next page

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City of Welland
Civic Square – Front Foyer
60 East Main St.
4 - 8 p.m.

There is an opportunity at any time during this process for interested persons to bring comments and concerns to the attention of the project managers, and to review outstanding issues. If you have any questions or comments or wish to be added to the study mailing list, please contact us:

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If you are unable to attend, or would like more information, please go to the project website https://www.niagararegion.ca/2041.

The Transportation and Water and Wastewater studies follow the Master Plan process as outlined in Section A.2.7 of the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA) Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Oct 2000, as amended in 2007 and 2011). The Master Plan will be filed under Approach #2 of the MEA Class EA Approach for Master Planning. The Master Servicing Plan will satisfy the planning requirements for Schedule A, A+ and select Schedule B projects and provide the basis for future investigations of identified Schedule B and C projects.

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LOCALNEWS

Big crowds drawn to Comic Con

From previous page

"These people are amazing and everyone is so warm and inviting," Winkler said of his fans, in an interview during a break.

"I see the falls from my motel room and it is so beautiful and powerful, I don't know what to say. It's unbelievable."

Best known as his role as Arthur Fonzarelli in the 1970s sitcom, he's also been introduced to a new generation with his Hank Zipzer book series for kids.

"Every generation knows me for something else," Winkler said.

Tom Payne, who plays Jesus on *The Walking Dead*, was another fan favourite.

"I'm having a very good time," he said during a brief breather from meeting fans young and old.

"*The Walking Dead* seems to appeal to every age group out there," he said.

Another celebrity guest who appealed to all generations was Caroll Spinney, the puppeteer behind Big Bird and Oscar the Grouch on *Sesame Street* for more than 40 years.

"It's really nice to be able to meet with the fans," he said.

Typically, Spinney can walk around in complete anonymity — wife Debra joked he is the most famous unknown person in the world — but the same can't be said at a ComicCon.

"They'll all know who I am here," he said with a smile.

Other celebrities included wrestling legend Shawn Michaels, moviemaker Kevin Smith and *Star Trek*'s Walter Koenig.

There were more than 100 vendors and exhibitors on site, offering everything from pop culture merchandise to original art.

This was artist Derek Laufman's first trip to comic con.

The London, Ont., freelance designer specializes in Chibi art. Japanese slang for "short person" or small child, Chibi describes a style of drawing characters with oversized heads or child-like versions of characters.

"This is my first ComicCon ever," he said. "I've been selling my prints from my website and that's being going pretty well, and a group of my friends encouraged me to go out and try some (comic) cons so here I am."

Laufman was impressed by the crowds and enjoyed meeting with fans eager to snap up some of his original artwork.

"Batman went quickly and we sold out of Yoda already."

Organizer Dabrowski is already preparing for the 2017 event.

"We've already booked a few guests for next year," he said.

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ALISON LANGLEY/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

West McDonald, Lesley Stratford and Arywn McDonald check out Niagara Falls Comic Con.



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LOCALNEWS

GE plant to have big impact in Welland

From Page 3

Niagara's team was competing for GE with jurisdictions across Canada since the company announced its plans.

Out of 10 municipalities in five provinces that were initially considered, the company narrowed its list to Welland and a municipality in Quebec before finally selecting Welland a few weeks ago.

Campion said millions of dollars worth of incentives helped seal the deal, provided by the city and Niagara Region through the Gateway Community Improvement Plan.

Although the company had initially estimated the cost of the new plant at $265 million, Campion said the designs of the facility and cost estimates are yet to be finalized. Once that information is available, the value of the incentives can be determined.

But waiving development charges alone could save the company as much as $6 million, the mayor said.

Degazio said the city's skilled workforce, manufacturing experience and the presence of Niagara College also contributed to the selection.

Campion said he hopes the presence of GE in the city will act as a catalyst to draw the attention of other major manufactures.

"This is a big company coming here. It's big news and people in the industry are going to start to say, 'Hey, what's going on in Welland?'" he said.

Campion said city council put its full support behind efforts to bring GE to Welland.

Ward 5 Coun. Mike Petrachenko, whose ward will be home to the new plant, was ecstatic about the announcement.

"It's fantastic news for the city of the Welland and for the region. It's great news," he said, giving full credit to local economic development staff.

"It's unbelievable. It's a credit to us, our workforce, the land that we have that's serviced, it's a fantastic location."

However, after years of helplessly watching as local industries have left Welland for greener pastures elsewhere, he had mixed emotions knowing that the city is benefitting from the job losses in Waukesha.

"I felt for those workers. I'm happy as all heck for Welland, but a part of me is a little disappointed for Wisconsin, but that's American politics."

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LOCALNEWS



GE plant a great idea for Niagara

LAURA BARTON
Postmedia Network

General Electric is coming to Welland and bringing 150 jobs.

Elyse Allan, president and chief executive officer of GE Canada, said in an announcement last Wednesday morning Welland was chosen because it met a number of requirements, including being close to the border.

A 450,000-square-foot facility is set to be built off of Highway 140, near Northern Gold Foods, with production beginning in 2018. Various engines used in the oil and gas industry will be built at the plant.

Welland Mayor Frank Campion said the city is excited about the employment and business opportunities that will come with this plant.

Residents in the downtown area who were asked about the new plant said it is a big plus in such a tough job market.

"I think Welland needs the work and there are a lot of people here in Welland who need a lot of work," Steven Greene said. "Ever since John Deere and all those other plants closed down, there's never been anything here for us. So I think it's a very good idea that something finally came here."


STEVEN GREENE

Helen Vera, who came to Welland as a refugee and is now a Niagara College nursing student, said the new jobs will bring hope to a community that has lost it.

She said she has noticed the shuttered buildings and thinks the new plant can help revitalize the area.

"It will bring life to the community," Vera said.


FRANK SMITH

Longtime Wellander Frank Smith said he likes the location picked for the plant because while the city needs jobs, he doesn't necessarily want them in his backyard.

"I got nothing against anybody building anything that's going to create employment, as long as it's safe."

Continued on next page



LOCALNEWS

Residents say GE plant great idea

From previous page

Smith worked in many of the other factories in Welland before they closed. He said this new plant stands a chance if it's under the right management.



DAVID DUQUETTE

David (Popcorn) Duquette's perspective is "things only go to rubbish if you let them go to rubbish."

He has a part-time job and does volunteer work, and he said he would like to be able to work more often. He is optimistic about Welland's future.

"I believe that there's going to be a change anyways," he said. "Welland is going to go back to prospering the way it used to."



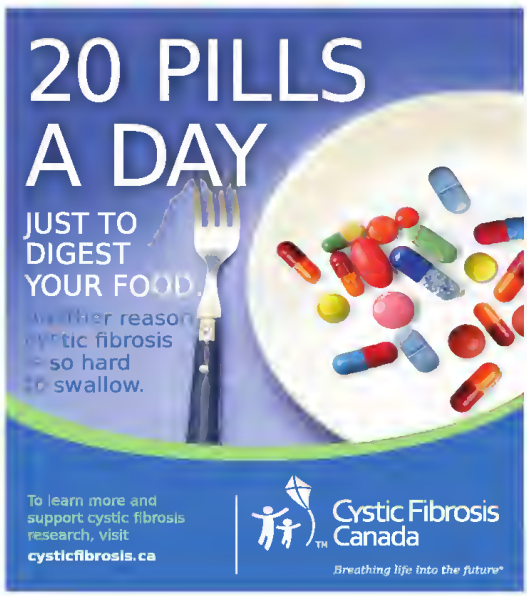
KASSANDRA MOYES

Among the positivity there were a few concerns, such as who will get the jobs and what skill level will be needed by applicants.

"There might be a lot of people willing to do it or there might not be enough," said Kassandra Moyes, a Niagara College student. "A lot of people might not be qualified to work in a factory."

Duquette said if he's able to do the job he will, but he was also concerned about what education level employers would be looking for.

lbarton@postmedia.com







LOCAL NEWS



MIKE DIBATTISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Dr. Robert Fallis says he supports medically assisted death as an option, but thinks Canada needs to have a broader discussion about death itself, including providing better funding and access to palliative-care services.

Nation's end-of-life law set to pass

RAY SPITERI
Postmedia Network

As Parliament and Canadians debate medical assistance in dying, one Niagara doctor says the country really needs to have a broader discussion about death itself.

"We should be talking about a larger bill that includes medical assistance in dying, but (also) talks about palliative care and talks about advanced directives — when people want to direct how they're going to die, when they're going to die, talks about all the important aspects of care that's important leading up to dying," says Dr. Robert Fallis, who supports medically assisted death as an option.

"Power of attorney, both medical (and) also financial. This needs to be encompassed within a much larger bill that allows people the rights of all this stuff throughout Canada in a much more comprehensive way."

The federal government has acknowledged the need for meaningful change for Canada's palliative-care system, which is specialized medical care for people with terminal illnesses.

Health Minister and former 30-year doctor Jane Philpott has cited evidence that only 15 per cent of Canadians have access to high-quality palliative care when they need it.

"Right now in this country we completely underfund palliative care," says Fallis, who has a history in emergency medicine and family practice in Niagara, but now focuses on addiction medicine.

"If palliative care had better access, better funding ... the whole discussion about the misery, the painful death, all of that stuff, would be significantly reduced, and the number of people required to have a medically assisted death would be substantially lower."

Fallis says a lot of people don't know that palliative care exists, and what it can do to help people so "they can really die with dignity, without pain and without a lot of the medical complications that precede death.

"If that's done well, then the whole idea of having to die, or having to have a medical-assisted death, is substantially reduced," he says.

"That's why, if we do this as a larger package of allowing people to die in an appropriate way and have that conversation, I think that that's much more inclusive."

The federal government's contentious bill on assisted dying sailed through the House of Commons last Tuesday.

It was approved by a vote of 186-137.

Bill C-14 must now pass the Senate, where it faces choppier waters as senators are pushing for amendments.

It is all but certain the bill will not be passed by Monday, the day the ban on assisted dying is formally lifted.

If no new federal law is on the books, many doctors may be reluctant to fulfil requests for hastened death, warns Philpott.

Last year, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that consenting adults have a right to seek medical help to end their lives if they have "grievous and irremediable" medical conditions that are causing enduring suffering that they deem intolerable.

It gave Ottawa until June 6 to change the law.

People have been allowed to seek approval from a court in the interim.

As of June 6, that requirement also expired. If no law was in place by then, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the country's largest medical regulator, will post updated guidelines on its website, setting out doctors' legal and professional obligations, as well as the criteria for assisted death as set out by the Supreme Court, says college spokeswoman Kathryn Clarke.

Continued on next page











LOCAL NEWS

Nation's end-of-life law set to pass

From previous page

Bill C-14 sets out considerably more restrictive criteria than the Supreme Court, allowing assisted dying only for clearly consenting adults "in an advanced stage of irreversible decline" from a serious and incurable disease, illness or disability and for whom natural death is "reasonably foreseeable."

Although the high court decriminalized assisted death for Canadians with a "grievous and irremediable" medical condition, it didn't define "grievous and irremediable." And, unlike the Liberal bill, did not limit it to a terminal illness.

Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould says the bill strikes the right balance among competing interests, respecting an individual's personal autonomy while protecting the vulnerable and respecting life.

Allowing assisted death for those who are suffering but not near the end of life could have an impact on public suicide prevention campaigns, she adds.

If the Senate were to pass any amendments to the bill, it would have to be sent back to the Commons, which would have to decide whether to accept or reject the amendments.

Theoretically, the bill could bounce back and forth between parliamentary chambers for weeks.

Even without amendments, the bill won't be put to a vote in the upper house by Monday's deadline.

Conservative Senate leader Claude Carignan predicts the vote won't happen before the end of next week, at the earliest.

Fallis, who is part of Segue Clinic, which has outpatient addiction treatment centres specializing in opioid addiction across Niagara and in Hamilton, says he supports the option of medical-assisted death.

"I may not represent the vast majority of physicians, but I think that it's something important that we do, that people have a choice," he says. "But I think there has to be safeguards in place, of course, for minors and for people that are particularly vulnerable." Fallis says "sometimes in medicine, you can't do what you want to do. "There is no treatment for certain things — it's just nasty. It can be a rapid or slow, lingering death with complications that aren't well-treated medically." He says physicians see that a lot with people living with illnesses such as Lou Gehrig's disease. "The type of death that people look for medical-assisted death are these kind of things where there's just no great treatment for it, even palliation. Palliation helps for most things, but for the things that palliation doesn't have good treatment for, I know, personally, I would like to have that choice." Fallis says, however, he has issues with the current Liberal bill. "They made it much more restrictive than the Supreme Court had made it previously in their recommendations," he says. "At this point, they're trying to bring forward legislation that may or may not survive either the legislative process of creating it, or the challenges that are going to happen once they've mandated it." Fallis says physicians have been preparing for this situation for a long time, so whether the legislation passes or not by June 6, "I don't think it really matters that much. "The regulatory bodies in every province and one of the territories have already issued guidelines to physicians who may provide medical assistance in dying, so we're not going to fall off a cliff on June 6 if they don't pass legislation," he says. "The guidelines provided by the College of Physicians and Surgeons ... all meet the criteria set out by the Supreme Court, and they're all fairly similar provincially." Niagara West Conservative MP Dean Allison recently met with community stakeholders who have an interest in Bill C-14.

Calling it one of the most important pieces of legislation MPs will deal with in the House of Commons, Allison says it needs "mucb more" discussion and "stronger safeguards" to protect vulnerable citizens.

Allison says he's opposed to Bill C-14.

"I just don't think there's enough safeguards that have been put in place. There's issues around conscience — faith institutions saying, 'we're concerned that if they ask us to perform, that we're going to need to,'" he says.

Continued on Page 21



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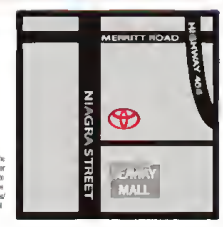
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LOCAL NEWS

Regional transit makes changes to aid students

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

Niagara Region wants to help students get to class with ease.

Public bus route changes are on their way and expected to benefit Brock University and Niagara College students who use the local transit system.

The Region's public works committee opted last Tuesday to approve a new route, Route 40/45, along the QEW connecting Niagara Falls and St. Catharines. It will include stops at Niagara College, the Outlet Collection at Niagara and the GO bus terminal at Fairview Mall.

An existing route, Route 50/55, which also runs between Niagara Falls and St. Catharines, will be altered to provide more direct service along Thorold Stone Road to Brock University.

That route will no longer stop at the Niagara-on-the-Lake outlet mall.

If the changes receive final approval from regional council Thursday, they will be implemented beginning September and will run until the end of April 2017.

During last Tuesday's meeting, it was also approved, pending budget approval, that inter-municipal transit routes, under a pilot set to expire at the end of April 2017, be extended to run until Dec. 31, 2017.

That extension, which would require an additional $430,000 in funding from the Region, is also pending presentations on future options from the inter-municipal transit working group.

In May 2015, Welland, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls, each with their own public transit system, were tasked with determining what an effective regionwide bus system might look like.

A working group was formed later that year and committed to improving post-secondary connectivity by September 2016.

Transit managers and regional staff have been working with Brock University and Niagara College student unions on short-term solutions for the start of the academic year until the group's recommendations are presented.

AliceMary Nakiwala, president of the Niagara College student administrative council, said in a video presentation to committee that students appreciate being included in the transit conversation.

Continued on Page 15

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LOCALNEWS



MIKE DIBATTISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara Region Transit bus stop sign in front of the bus terminal on Erie Avenue in Niagara Falls.

Regional transit makes changes to aid students

From Page 13

"These changes will truly provide a seamless and integrated transit system for Niagara College and Brock University students," she said.

It's hoped, she added, that the direct connection from Fairview Mall to the Niagara-on-the-Lake campus will help to increase enrolment at the school, offering GTA students the ability to travel to campus with ease.

"This is a positive step forward for the connectivity of the integrated inter-municipal system that we're working on," St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik said.

The progress speaks to the co-operation seen among the working group and the local transit operators, he added.

Erin O'Hoski, the Region's manager of partnership development, said the IMT group is aiming to have recommendations for future options before committee in early November.

Asked by several councillors whether the discussions between the three municipalities are heading toward a consolidated service, O'Hoski said consolidation is one option being investigated.

"The working group has committed to reviewing a number of options, including consolidation."

Regional Chairman Alan Caslin said the group is looking at ways to improve the system, through use of "leading edge technologies," such as the Presto card — a fare payment system for various transit systems.

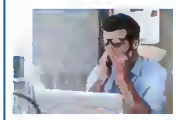
In the meantime, the intention is to make the pilot now in place "the best it can be," he said.

Niagara Falls Coun. Bob Gale said he remains hopeful that the group will be innovative in its methods, using not only buses but other methods of transportation such as taxis and Uber for outlying areas.

Buses in those areas are often near empty, he said, adding efficiencies should be found to save funds.

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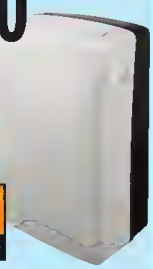


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LOCALNEWS

Region calls for strict pot regulations

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

Third time's a charm.

After twice being sent back to staff, a motion regarding pot regulation and control has received approval from Niagara Region's public health and social services committee.

The motion, to be sent to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, provides recommendations from Niagara Region should the Canadian government move forward with the legalization of marijuana.



PELHAM MAYOR DAVE AUGUSTYN

Pelham Mayor Dave Augustyn, who previously took issue with the document's wording, felt the latest version properly captured the Region's stance on the issue.

While the motion does not endorse legalization, it does recommend that should legalization occur, strict regulations be put in place to reduce health and societal harms associated with marijuana use, he said.

Those include limiting access by limiting where cannabis can be purchased and implementing controlled pricing; setting a minimum age for purchase; investing federal dollars in education and prevention; addressing and preventing marijuana-impaired driving; and prohibiting marketing, advertising and sponsorship, especially to children.

The document also outlines Niagara's role as an early leader in municipal bylaws to restrict harmful effects from second-hand smoke. It asks that direct and indirect health effects of smoking of any kind be taken into consideration as legislation and regulations are considered.

The lessons society has learned about smoking tobacco are reflected in the motion to deter smoking of any kind, Augustyn said.

The motion will seek final approval from regional council June 9.

mfirth@postmedia.com
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Many Hands looks for next challenge

Postmedia staff

After completely renovating the Hope Centre building on Welland's King Street last year, Niagara College students are looking for their next challenge.

The college is accepting applications from charitable organizations from throughout the region for the 2016-17 Many Hands Project — a program that brings together students from the college's events management and construction studies programs to renovate facilities used by local organizations.

Co-ordinator of the college's event management post-graduate program Christine Blane said the project provides "excellent hands-on learning opportunities" for students, as well as an opportunity for a local agency to "receive much-needed improvements to their facilities."

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Many Hands Project. Since it was established in 1997, the project has benefitted 19 agencies, including through renovations at Hope Centre, the Strive Niagara building in Welland, the Upper Deck Youth Centre in Vineland, Port Cares Reach Out Food Centre in Port Colborne and St. John Ambulance in St. Catharines.

Not-for-profit agencies involved providing community-based services in Niagara are asked to submit a wish list to the college, including construction needs and specific resources, prior to Aug. 8, online at www.niagaracollege.ca/manyhands.

Participating agencies must be willing to commit resources to the project to be considered by an advisory committee, in the hope of supporting multiple organizations across Niagara this year.





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LOCAL NEWS

$1,100 in cosmetics sold to autistic man

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

An apology has been issued and a full refund granted after a Pen Centre store came under fire last weekend for what many people considered mistreatment of an autistic man.

A Facebook post detailing an incident that occurred at Adore Cosmetics last week quickly went viral last Saturday with more than 3,200 shares online.

It was last Friday when the parents of 26-year-old Tom, whose last name has not been released, found a package in the room of their autistic son containing more than $1,100 in cosmetics.

The online posting, created by family friend Sandra Frayne, alleges staff at Adore Cosmetics convinced Tom during a May 25 visit that he had bags under his eyes and sensitive skin that required the help of their products. When Tom's parents visited the store to discuss the situation, the post claims they were told by management that staff had no choice but to treat the man as they would any other customer and approve the sale.

According to the post, store staff checked that Tom was employed — he works at a local McDonald's — and bad him sign a paper acknowledging the purchase, made using Tom's credit card, as a final sale. It was noted by staff, the post reads, that he was not wearing a medical bracelet and was not accompanied by a support worker or caregiver.

When Tom's parents went to the store seeking a refund, they were denied.

The Adore store owner and staff at referred media questions to the Miami-based company's communications department. A statement was issued through e-mail late last Monday that said the initial refusal to offer a refund was "in direct violation of Adore Cosmetics brand policies." Because Adore stores are independently owned and operated, there can at times be a "lag in our becoming aware of issues like this," the statement reads.

When the company learned of the incident via social media, the store was contacted and a refund was issued to Tom, the statement said.

"We also directly apologized to his family. We made sure that the Adore Cosmetics store at Pen Centre terminated the employee who sold Tom the products and violated the brand policy regarding both sales and returns."

The company said the incident "in no way reflects the ethics or policies of Adore Cosmetics."

"It was, in fact, a gross violation by an individual employee of a store that is independently operated as opposed to a store directly owned by the company or a franchise. We'd like to extend our sincere apologies not only to Tom and his family (but also) to the City of St. Catharines."

Pen Centre administration was also quick to react.

"Immediately upon bearing about it, we got involved right away," mall manager John Bragagnolo said, adding mall staff reached out to the family in an effort to resolve the issue.

"We organized for an immediate refund to take place."

The mall, he said, has also given Tom additional gift cards "as a sign of our appreciation for his patronage and to compensate him for any inconvenience this has caused."

Bragagnolo expressed disappointment in the way the situation was initially handled.

"We've been a proud supporter of Autism Ontario for years and years. We're very aware and sensitive to the challenge people with autism as well as their families face," he said.

"This really flies in the face of what we're all about. It was just natural for us to make this situation right."

Continued on Page 22

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LOCALNEWS

College has role to play in GE facility

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

Niagara College bopes to play a big role in helping ensure the new General Electric plant planned for Welland has the skilled labour force it needs.

College president Dan Patterson called the announcement last Wednesday "great news for Niagara and we were pleased to support the city's efforts to bring this facility to Welland."

In an e-mailed statement, Patterson pointed out that the company referred to Welland's skilled workforce as one of the reasons it selected this city for the new 450,000 square foot plant, which "really highlights the important role that Niagara College plays in the economic development of our region."

"Niagara College will support GE by providing highly skilled and knowledgeable technology and business graduates that are work-ready and prepared to excel with GE, as well as applied research support," Patterson said. "Through our new Walker Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre at the Welland Campus we can provide access to faculty and research teams, resources and equipment to support research and innovation. We look forward to working with GE – both in terms of providing skilled graduates and in pursuing opportunities for applied research."

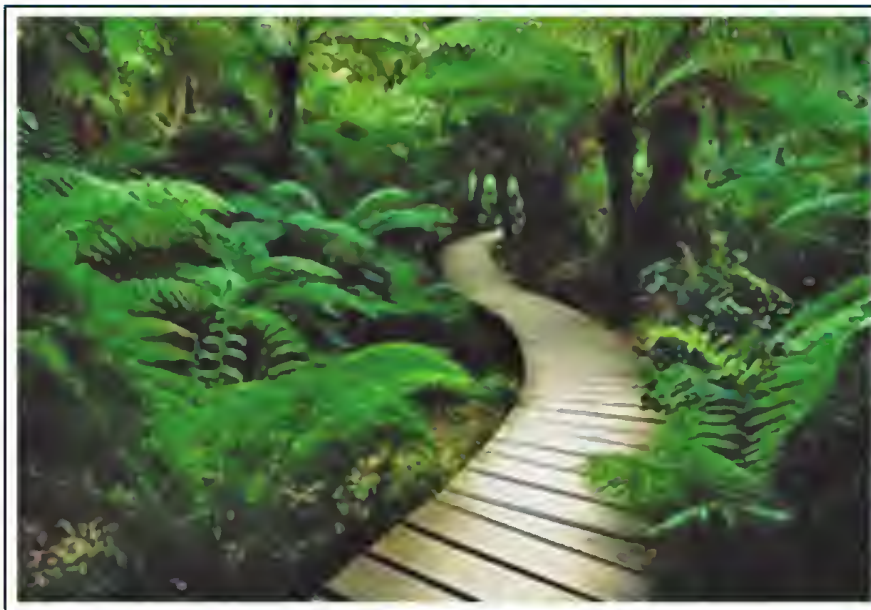
Patterson said colleges are "uniquely suited" to help to produce graduates to meet the demands for skilled workers at industries across Canada.

"In terms of technology and skilled trades, Niagara College has made significant investments in the Rankin Technology Centre at the Welland Campus to support these programs," Patterson added.

GE announced Wednesday that it is building a new engine manufacturing plant on 75 acres of property that it purchased from the city of Welland, off Highway 140.

The facility will ultimately replace a manufacturing facility currently running in Waukesha, Wis. Ground is to be broken for the facility in August, and the company hopes to begin operations there in early 2018.

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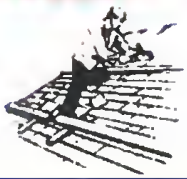
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LOCALNEWS

Nation's end-of-life law set to pass

From Page 11

"I'm concerned what happens down the road when they start looking at ... vulnerable groups, those with mental illness, mature teens ... where does this bill go from here? We know what happens over time — unintended consequences, and that would be really one of my major concerns."

Ron Wiens, an administrator at United Mennonite Home in Vineland, was one of the participants in the meeting with Allison.

He says the physician who serves the faith-based nursing home has indicated they will opt out of providing doctor-assisted death. "The doctor for our facility does not want to provide or take part in physician-assisted death," he says. "He's a Christian, and he is a doctor who will avail himself of the right of conscience not to participate." United Mennonite Home is a charitable, not-for-profit nursing home that bas 128 residents, says Wiens.

"As the administrator in a nursing home that was started by nine Mennonite churches, we are opposed to Bill C-14, but also we would not want to be forced to provide that service here in our facility." Konnie Peet, chief executive officer of Shalom Manor in Grimsby, says she worries there's nothing in the legislation to protect "conscientious objectors."

"It's not stated explicitly in the bill that there's respect ... for people's religious rights and conscientious objections," she says. "From a Christian perspective ... we're asking that right for our staff and our volunteers ... and our organization as a whole be equally respected as this bill goes forward."

The faith-based home was started by churches of the reformed Christian community. Its long-term care facility has 144 beds, while its small retirement home has 36 units, says Peet. "It is really quite sad that we are essentially rushing Bill C-14 through in a country where we actually lack a holistic approach to death and dying ... which includes the support for palliative-care strategies," she says. "My view, and I think the view of a lot of people, is whatever side they land on with respect to physician-assisted dying, people do recognize that if we had a good, comprehensive approach to palliative care, we may have less demand for physician-assisted dying."

Peet says people go to long-term care facilities to "end their days, and we feel that dying is part of living. "If you were to come to this home, and many long-term care homes in this area, every day there's a celebration of life, even as people know that they're coming closer to the end," she says. "As a religious home, we have a certain perspective with respect to the sanctity of life, so we're not supportive of the notion of ending life prematurely through physician-assisted death." Carol Nagy, executive director for Hospice Niagara, says the agency is watching what happens with Bill C-14 with "concern."

"Hospice philosophy is that we provide quality-of-life services and its been that way for years," she says. "It's really important that there is an understanding between physician and care providers and the patient that quality, end-of-life services are there to respect the person's autonomy and their wishes — they're there to provide dignity in dying, but they're also there not to hasten or prolong death, and that's that trust aspect." Nagy says Hospice Niagara will continue with the services that "provide excellent pain and symptom management.

"Our services work to reduce suffering that people have, and part of that suffering comes sometimes (from) fear of death, and we work to reduce that, and work with the patient, as well as the family members," she says. "Our service will continue to not do anything that will hasten or prolong death. Tbat's a mandate tbat we've had for years — that's our philosophy of care." Nagy says Hospice Niagara doesn't know if it will have any legislative requirements that will challenge its position.

"We recognize that a need for compassion is even so much more necessary when someone is considering a request to hasten their death, and we will uphold our same principles of compassion, of dignity, of autonomy, in working through that underlying suffering," she says. "Then we will look at, based on any legislative requirements, how we can provide referral to the appropriate sources, of which I can't even begin to guess what that is going to look like. We just have no guidelines at this point in time."

Sgt. Paul Spiridi, of the Niagara Regional Police's fraud unit, is also the service's main contact for elder abuse. He says there's not much the NRP can say about the issue until they see what the actual legislation is going to be. "These are personal decisions that people make amongst themselves, so from a policing standpoint, we just want to make sure that all of the safeguards are in place so it's not another step towards abuse, or the allegation of abuse," says Spiridi.

"While there may not be any abuse, it may be another thing that, because if it's not clear, it raises an issue for people to understand the motives behind what happens with these private decisions." Asked if he's concerned some family members might basten the death of a loved one to get their hands on their inheritance, Spiridi says "anything's possible, but I don't think ... it's going to be a motivation to homicide.



FOTOLIA IMAGE

"It takes a lot for a person to take that step to take money," he says. "We see a lot of theft by power of attorney, or questionable things happening in finances beforehand. Is this a motivation? It's possible, but ... I don't think ... we're going to see a big rush of people trying to use it." Spiridi says sometimes the personal decisions people make are between themselves and their physicians, and they don't share information with their family.

"We see that happening now — people don't share information about their finances, so then when something like this does come up, and if the family, or not all of the family is involved, it raises the question, so we just want to make sure that if a decision like this is made that all of the checks and balances are in place, so that the families have peace of mind knowing that the decision was made willingly."

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LOCALNEWS

$1,100 in cosmetics sold to autistic man

From Page 18

While stores each have their own return policies, Bragagnolo said there "has to he room for special circumstances like this."

"I don't helieve it was done intentionally. But somehow there was a perception he was taken advantage of. That mere perception is just wrong. Unfortunately common sense should have prevailed here as far as the retailer went. Once we pointed out to them what had transpired, they definitely saw the error of their ways."

Jordan Shaw helieves a learning opportunity is at hand.

While the communications and volunteer coordinator for the Niagara chapter of Autism Ontario was saddened hy the experience Tom had, she felt it has helped to raise awareness of autism spectrum disorder in the community.

"Perhaps if this employee had heen hetter educated about autism, more knowledgeahle ahout how to interact with an individual on the spectrum in that customer-salesperson role, then maybe this whole situation could've heen avoided," she said.

Education is key to ensuring this doesn't happen again, she added.

Shaw encouraged employers to get a conversation started in the workplace. She recommended using educational aids at autismontario.com to help inform employees.

Once informed, they can then "decide on a case-by-case hasis what the hest action is to take" when dealing with customers on the spectrum, she said.

"You may have a customer coming in who is on the higher end of the spectrum and is ahle to come in and shop on their own, hut it's still important for employees in retail situations to he ahle to recognize those signs so they can make the shopping experience positive for that individual."

Programs run hy the local chapter for adults with ASD focus on social skills development.

"When situations like this happen, it can he very disheartening hecause it negatively impacts the independence that young person has worked so hard to achieve," Shaw said.

Frayne, who created the online post, was touched hy the amount of support Tom and his family has received.

She had hoped to draw attention to the incident hut had no idea how quickly, and how far, the news would spread.

Within the first 24 hours, she was receiving messages from as far away as England.

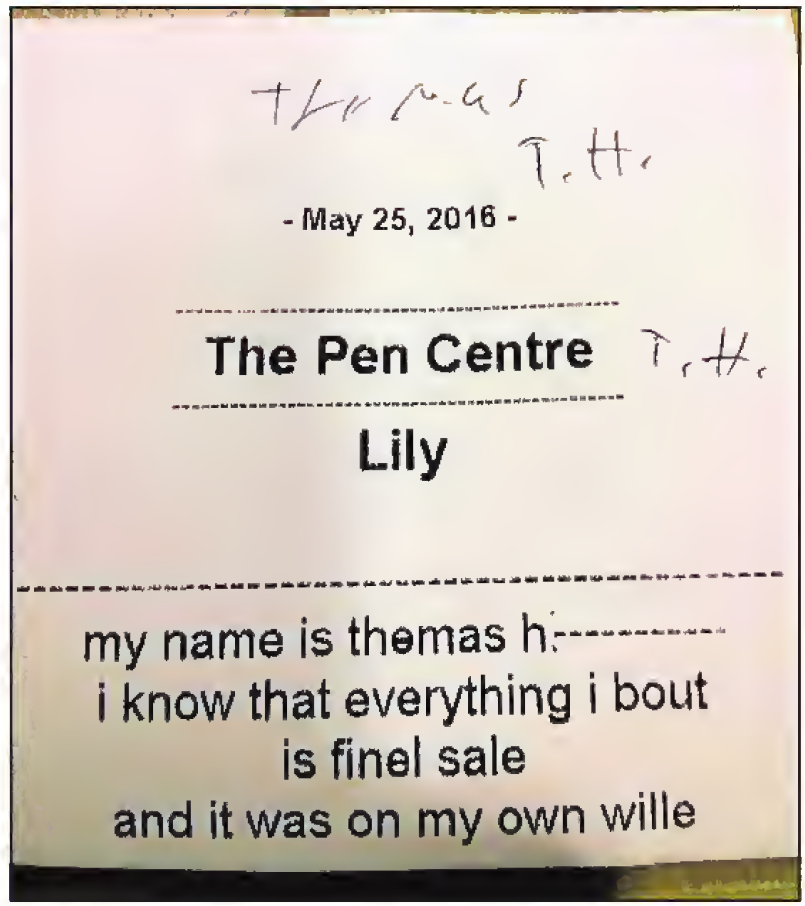
"It was lovely to see so many people wanting to just do the simple thing, to help somebody."

In 2013, a Forever Flawless kiosk in the Pen Centre was criticized after a woman with Down syndrome purchased $1,700 in face cream and a post ahout the incident went viral on Facehook.

A refund and an apology was also issued at that time.

Attempts to reach Tom's family for comment last Monday were unsuccessful.

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FACEBOOK PHOTO

A 26-year-old autistic man was asked to sign a receipt indicating he understood the $1,100 in products from Adore Cosmetics was a final sale.

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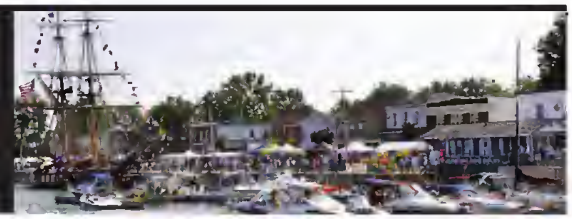
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